

WEEK 2 - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

THE FUNCTIONS AND QUALITIES OF LIGHT

The Functions and Qualities of Light

FUNCTION VS QUALITY

- ▶ Visibility
- ▶ Selective Focus
- ▶ Modeling
- ▶ Mood
- ▶ Revealing the Space
- ▶ Supporting the Story
- ▶ Intensity
- ▶ Color
- ▶ Texture/Shape
- ▶ Contrast
- ▶ Direction
- ▶ Movement

Functions are different goals

Qualities are the tools we use to create Functions

THE FUNCTIONS

The Functions of Light

VISIBILITY

- ▶ The principle of using light to reveal or illuminate objects.
- ▶ Intensity - How bright the light is
- ▶ Clarity - How defined the light is reflecting off the object is

Clarity - how clearly you can see something

Director asks for higher intensity may just be asking for more clarity

Angle of the light - front flatten decrease, side heighten increase

Early days of theatre this just meant having enough light to see. The more the better.

SELECTIVE FOCUS

- ▶ Drawing the audience's eye to a specific location
- ▶ Intensity and color differences
- ▶ Relative brightness

Relative brightness - most of the stage is lit, but one area is brighter than the rest



Intensity Differences
Elements 2016



Color Differences

Stop the World 2016

Contrasting colors to make an actor pop out from the background.

Complimentary colors to make an actor blend into the background.

The Functions of Light

MODELING

- ▶ Emphasis of the three dimensionality and texture of objects
- ▶ Highlights and shadows

Taking advantage of the eye's natural depth perception

Direct front light flattens out and erases facial features

Side light sculpts features with highlights and shadows

Mutual Consent 2016



The Functions of Light

MOOD

- ▶ The emotional tone, attitude, or response to the lighting.
- ▶ Invoking specific emotions through color, intensity, texture, and movement

Greenish Fluorescent = uncomfortable, while soft amber = warm and welcoming

Bright sunny day is cheerful, dim cloudy day is depressing

Anastasia
Hartford, Connecticut 2016
LD: Donald Holder



The Functions of Light

REVEALING THE SPACE

- ▶ Deciding which areas of the acting space to light
- ▶ What should remain in darkness and what should be revealed by light
- ▶ Shadow Designers

Does the whole stage need to be lit or just a small section of it

SUPPORTING THE STORY

- ▶ Creating atmospheres, transitions, and scenes to move the story along
- ▶ Example: Day vs Night, Inside vs. Outside

THE QUALITIES

INTENSITY

- ▶ How bright or dim a light is
- ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ Create visibility
 - ▶ Draw focus
 - ▶ Set the mood
 - ▶ Reveal the space
- ▶ Relative brightness

Can be measured in candelas, foot candles (rarely used any more), or lumens.
More often described in a comparative basis.

COLOR

- ▶ Our perception of the different wavelengths of light.
- ▶ Hue - the shade of a color. Example: Red, Green, Blue
- ▶ Saturation - how colorful the color is. Example: Pink - Red - Maroon
- ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ Draw focus
 - ▶ Model
 - ▶ Set the mood
 - ▶ Support the story

the source - tungsten more amber, arc more green

filtering (selective absorption) done by gel

easiest quality to observe

hardest quality to control due to unpredictability of results

Saturation - how much white or black is in the color (more pigment than light)

TEXTURE/SHAPE

- ▶ How hard or soft the light appears.
- ▶ Smooth or broken textures can be made using gobos or haze, sharp or blurred lines.
- ▶ The geometric shape of the light.
- ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ Model
 - ▶ Set the mood
 - ▶ Support the story

pattern templates = gobos

CONTRAST

- ▶ The apparent difference between two items, generally the brightest and dimmest lights on stage.
- ▶ Also applies to Color, Texture, Direction, Shape, and Movement.
- ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ Create visibility
 - ▶ Draw focus
 - ▶ Set the mood
 - ▶ Support the story

DIRECTION

- ▶ The perceived angle from which light enters the space.
- ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ Create visibility
 - ▶ Draw focus
 - ▶ Model
 - ▶ Set the mood
 - ▶ Reveal the space

The angle of a light helps to define or reveal the form of an object.

High - Low angle

Front - Side - Back position

MOVEMENT

- ▶ Change in the quality of light over time
- ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ Draw focus
 - ▶ Set the mood
 - ▶ Reveal the space
 - ▶ Support the story

change from moment to moment

watching the actual source (a candle), without seeing the source (spot light, lighting one area and then another), change in color, intensity, direction, transitioning from one static scene to another



Questions?
